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No-place, new places: Death and its rituals in urban Asia

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No-Place, New Places: Death and Its Rituals in Urban Asia

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Abstract: In many Asian cities, particularly those that confront increasing land scarcity, the conversion from burial to cremation has been encouraged by state agencies in the last several decades. From Hong Kong to Seoul to Singapore, planning agencies have sought to reduce the use of space for the dead, in order to release land for the use of the living. More secular guiding principles regarding efficient land use in these cities had originally come up against the symbolic values invested in burial spaces, resulting in conflicts between different value systems. In more recent years, however, the shift to cremation and columbaria has been marked and even voluntary. In still more recent years, even columbaria have become overcrowded, and sea burials (the scattering of ashes in the seas) are being encouraged, as are woodland burials (the scattering of ashes in woodlands or around trees) in places like Hong Kong and Taipei. Indeed, the latter has been promoted as the "new eco-friendly burial method." As burial methods change, so too do commemorative rituals, and the annual Qingming Festival (tomb sweeping) has seen the rise of new online and mobile phone rituals in China. This paper traces the ways in which physical spaces for the dead in several Asian cities have diminished and changed over time, the growth of virtual space for them, the accompanying discourses that influence these dynamics, and the new rituals that emerge concomitantly with the contraction of land space.

Keywords: Qingming festival, Necrogeographies, Columbaria, Virtual space, Netor

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Editor's Preface

In this chapter, the choice to embrace *no-place* as a religious value moves from defining "church" as a gathering of people and not as a grand building to another religious context where *no-place* confronts *place*. For Lily Kong, *no-place* with all its religious valences folds literally into no-place, the lack of space to accommodate the dead in the crowded cities of South and Southeast Asia. Death stands on the line between the physical and nonphysical existence—a crucial intersection for many religious traditions where the human body transits to beingness beyond raw physicality. Yet for many traditions especially in East Asia, tending graves, which retain some *presence* of the deceased, has long been a family duty among the Chinese. The grave retains a *place* for the dead among the living. Yet changes in the residential environment of urban areas within the Chinese-majority metropolises of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taipei compel, as Lily Kong explains, the reduction of "space for the dead, to release land for the use of the living," as new high-rise residences and new suburban developments crowd the already restricted space in these cities. Lily Kong uses this conundrum to rethink aspects of spatial theory in Asia and beyond. What happens when there is no physical *place* for the dead? Can spaces *beyond physical place* develop to accommodate the continuing tradition of tending to the dead?

In this chapter, Lily Kong suggests a trajectory: "how death and its rituals have shifted from conditions of spatial competition to spatial compression and then to spatial transcendence." While chronicling waves of resistance, she traces the gradual acceptance of cremation and interment into the more space-conscious columbaria. But soon even these compressed yet concrete places will overflow with no-place to expand. In the three cities in question, government bureaucrats and funeral directors experiment with other forms of burial from scattering ashes in parks, woodlands, and at sea. But Kong traces an intriguing swing from the preservation of the body, to maintaining ashes with their ephemeral physicality, to a new kind of placeless and immaterial space for the dead—cyberspace. Ritual acts of tending the grave shift to memorializing, which requires a public venue but not a physical space. Especially in mainland China, the dead live again in special websites dedicated to memorialization.

Considering why these "shifts away from material space" rise so readily in a material-saturated consumer society for *some* netizens, Kong suggests that contemporary global culture with "throw-away artifacts" and the changing nature of human identity from corporeal to digital, from flesh to avatar, eases the shift of the final resting place for the dead from grave to website. All of these changes meet strong resistance, yet these moves from substantial place to insubstantial space challenge the meaning of both *place* and *space*. In the end, having no-place for the dead becomes an event—ontological and spatial—that spurs the reality of *no-place*. In this chapter, then, *no-place* moves beyond the theological-spatial significance that Yohan Yoo added in his description of the radical differences in the Christian understanding of church in Seoul, to an ontological-spatial shift in the increasingly dominant presence of cyberspace as part of Asian religious realms.

Introduction

In many Asian cities, particularly those that confront increasing land scarcity in urban areas, death and burial practices have changed over several decades in order to reduce the use of space for the dead, to release land for the use of the living. The most significant conversion has been from traditional grave burials to cremation and the use of columbaria, which state agencies have encouraged in many places, from Hong Kong to Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, and China. While there were many conflicts and resistances to cremation in earlier years, in more recent times, the shift to cremation and the placing of ashes at columbaria niches has increased markedly and is even voluntary. In still more recent years, even sites for the columbaria have become overcrowded giving way to creative uses of space promoted as the new "eco-friendly" burial methods. As burial methods change, so too have

the nature of commemorative rituals, and the annual Tomb-Sweeping Festival[1] has seen the rise of new online and mobile phone rituals in China further developing a new kind of placeless space for the dead.

In this chapter, I trace the ways in which physical spaces for the dead in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China have diminished and changed over time, followed by the growth of a new space for them in the virtual realm. Drawing on government records, newspaper accounts, visits to new sites of woodland and parkland burials, and interviews with the bereaved and government officials, I examine the accompanying discourses that shape and are shaped by these dynamics and show how death and its rituals have shifted from conditions of spatial competition to spatial compression and then to spatial transcendence.

While there is an existing literature that examines the shift from grave burials to cremations and the interment of ashes in columbaria, more recent changes in death practices in several Asian countries have not yet received research attention. After providing an overall account of the move from burial to cremation throughout East and Southeast Asia, I will examine three cases of the creative use of new sites for depositing ashes in lieu of the now overcrowded columbaria: first, the introduction of sea burials in Hong Kong, the strategies, discursive and material, employed to encourage their use, and resistances confronting the authorities in managing this method of interment; second, the method of ash scattering in woodlands and ash burial in parklands in Taiwan and the parallel strategies for encouraging these practices and the continued cultural resistances; and third, the introduction of online mourning and memorialization practices in China, the conditions that have promoted its widespread adoption and the simultaneous resistances to this quite radical shift away from any sense of connectedness to place.

In large part, the more recent changes in death practices and memorialization rituals have been prompted by the same land scarcity and competition for space between the living and the dead that drove the earlier shift from grave burials to cremation. As even columbaria have become crowded with limited niches for new urns and ashes, various city authorities have encouraged people not to keep the ashes of their deceased relations, but to disperse them in the sea, woodlands, or parklands. Thus, while the contested efforts to keep cemeteries in the face of other pressing needs exemplified urban spatial competition, the shift to cremation and columbaria represented an attempt to compress the space needed for the dead. Yet, the growing crowdedness at columbaria has led to spatial competition once again, as spatial compression becomes an inadequate strategy. Consequently, the newly introduced methods of ash dispersal and burial seek to move beyond spatial compression to spatial transcendence, deliberately diminishing the significance of a specific site of physical burial or memorialization. Governments increasingly promote scattering of ashes in the sea and burials of ashes in woodlands to meet this end. Even in woodland burials where ashes are contained in urns and buried in the ground, the expectation is that the urns will biodegrade fairly quickly in a matter of months, and the ashes mix with the earth. The lack of a specific location of burial, the mixing of ashes with earth, and the reuse of sites again and again are paired with the introduction of online memorialization, which allows family members and descendants to engage in memorial rites online, without the need to return to a physical site of burial, or a crematorium niche. This is an attempt to address the lack of space through spatial transcendence. Ultimately the chapter examines the more fundamental cultural shift that this represents in the Chinese belief system. Shifts away from material space—much like the guru's shift to inner space—seem odd in the context of a rise in material consumer society, but perhaps the nature of consumer goods as throw-away artifacts in fact explains why, in death, the lack of something lasting and abiding such as a burial site is becoming acceptable. Yet, the ritual has not disappeared because in the Chinese belief system, death is only "a point of transition"; it does not signify the "end of a person's participation in the lives and activities of his [sic] family, nor of they with him" (Tong 2004, 4). Ancestors depend on the descendants for continuing spiritual sustenance of food, shelter, and money, while the family requires the assistance of the ancestors to deal with the problems of daily life. To maintain that relationship with the ancestors thus remains important, but like

[1] Qingming Festival is a yearly festival during which families honor their departed. It entails a visit to the gravesite to clean it and to make offerings (usually flowers, candles, and incense).

so many relationships in the contemporary urban world, physical presence or a physical place may no longer be necessary.

Necrogeographies

> In all societies, regardless of whether their customs call for festive or restrained behavior, the issue of death throws into relief the most important cultural values by which people live their lives and evaluate their experiences. Life becomes transparent against the background of death and fundamental social and cultural values are revealed. (Huntington and Metcalf 1979, 2)

Death practices and rituals are not just significant to the deceased and their family members. They are a reflection of the changing conditions of the living, as well as shifting meanings and discourses about life. Burial spaces have cultural and symbolic meaning invested by the living, "represent[ing] in miniature the fabric of the society that established them" (Teather 1998, 105). Death and rituals of memorialization foreground "values that are not always visible, explicit, or understood" (Tong 2004, 4). Understanding death and its related practices and rituals thus offers insights into life and the living. For this reason, sociologists, anthropologists, geographers, historians, and many other scholars have studied death and its associated practices.

For as long as death was associated with burial, it was an inherently spatial phenomenon. The literature on deathscapes addresses many themes and issues (Kong 1999, 1–10), for example, the ways in which graveyards and memorials offer insights into issues of space and place in regard to racial and class segregation and hegemonic notions of gender roles (Hartig and Dunn 1998, 5–20); the recreation of landscape idylls through cemeteries (Morris 1997, 410–434); and the ways in which space is a resource that is contested (Bollig 1997, 35–50). This last issue is of particular relevance in this chapter.

Space as a contested domain is a recurrent theme in much research on deathscapes. In Hong Kong (Teather 1998) and Singapore (Yeoh 1991), for example, government authorities have generally adopted a modernist and utilitarian view of burial space, highlighting the insanitary nature of burial grounds, "unclean," "disorderly," or "polluted" (Huang 2007; Knapp 1977; Tan and Yeoh 2002; Teather 2001; Tong and Kong 2000). They have also viewed cemeteries as "major space wasters" (Yeoh and Tan 1995, 188), advocating that space used by cemeteries should be better deployed for developmental purposes, so much so that death becomes, in a Heideggerian sense, "a science to quantify, objectify and rationalize."[2] On the other hand, as many of these studies illustrate, the local society often emphasizes the symbolic and religious meanings of the graves, their roles as focal points of identity and as expressions of relationships with the land and as central to the practice of religious beliefs and rituals.

The "pollution" and "uncleanliness" associated with deathscapes—both in terms of health and sanitation and in terms of symbolic pollution—coupled with the lack of space in modern Asian cities led urban authorities to encourage the adoption of cremation. The change from grave burials to cremation tends to occur during periods of economic growth when the demand for scarce land for development purposes is highest. For Japan, cremation became the dominant practice during the rapid economic growth of the 1960s (Nakagawa 1995, 1–3), while in South Korea not only did funerary customs change dramatically in the 1980s (Lee 1996), the rate of cremations also increased consistently since then (Teather et al. 2001). Similarly, in Hong Kong, the government began to encourage cremation in 1968, while in Singapore, the idea was actively promoted in the 1960s. Most of these campaigns for cremation were initiated by state agencies. Grave burials were simultaneously made less attractive, as prices were raised, and new burial laws introduced (Teather et al. 2001) such as the return of the land to the

[2] I thank Andrew Willford for offering this perspective.

government after a set number of years (Tremlett 2007). In the case of Singapore, the funeral specialists (the middlemen) were also instrumental in encouraging the shift, as they had more contact with the Chinese community, were able to adapt coffins and religious paraphernalia (such as ensuring that the coffins were not too thick and more amenable to burning), and more significantly, disseminate information "without any semblance of threat or coercion" (Tan and Yeoh 2002, 10). These were all periods of aggressive economic change in the respective places, and the ambition for growth was at its height.

Despite evidence of increased adoption of cremation, research also demonstrates the abiding influence of the traditional practice of *feng shui* (literally wind-water, or the practice of geomancy) and the continued significance of ritual festivals such as the grave-sweeping ceremonies of *Chongyang* and *Qingming* (Teather 2001; Tan and Yeoh 2002). For example, the practice of *feng shui* continues even in mainland China, where commercial cemeteries and columbaria in Guangzhou are often designed based on *feng shui* principles, despite the Chinese Communist Party's attempts to get rid of what they considered "superstitious" practices since 1949 (Teather 2001). Similarly, in Singapore, family members select their preferred niches in public columbarium, and some even consult geomancers for the best locations in the columbarium (Tan and Yeoh 2002).

While traditional practices have not completely disappeared with modernity, funeral customs rituals have been adapted in many cultures. In Singapore, funeral wakes have been shortened, and rituals invented to "make up" for days that would have been used for funeral rituals (e.g., turning of the coffin around to signify the passing of a day) (Tong and Kong 2000). Further, with remains now interred in niches at public columbaria, the deceased individual no longer rests with other family members or those of the same community or clan, but with complete strangers (Teather et al. 2001; Tong and Kong 2000), interestingly mirroring the current practice of purposely distributing ethnicities in the HDB flats and thus breaking with the symbolism of lineage that traditional family graveyards used to represent (Teather 2001). In this situation, descendants in Singapore introduce the ancestor to the deceased that he/she is interred next to and ask them to be good friends and neighbors (Tong and Kong 2000).

What is evident from existing studies is that death practices and deathscapes have evolved over time in a number of Asian countries. As a consequence, sacred space and sacred time have had to be reconceptualized, and rituals invented and reinvented to suit conditions of modernity while addressing abiding belief systems (Tong and Kong 2000). That burial practices and rituals persist (despite transformations) suggests that ancestors continue to play a significant role in the various Asian contexts discussed here, suggesting that the dead continue to have a presence in contemporary urban Asia, albeit in different ways from times past.

Sea Burials in Hong Kong

Practical Constraints, Functional Planning

In the first of three cases, I focus on the introduction of sea burials in Hong Kong. I address some of the conflicts over the new practice as well as its nascent acceptance among the population. Sea burials involve family members bringing the ashes of their deceased relative onto a boat and scattering the ashes out at sea. This may be accompanied by a ritual, such as the offering of incense to a tablet that is set up on the boat, accompanied by a priest chanting scriptures, and the scattering of fresh flowers into the sea. Sea burials, where they have been practiced, often attract those whose lives have been connected with the sea, such as fishermen and sailors. Because there is no specific site (neither grave nor columbaria) where family members can go to pay their respects to the deceased in future times, sea burials are thought to be best paired by online practices of memorialization, for which more elaboration follows in a subsequent section.

In 2007, the Hong Kong government introduced a set of guidelines on public sea burials, motivated by a desire to find solutions to the anticipated shortage of burial and columbaria places. This put an end to a 22-year ban on sea burial. The first official sea burial within territorial waters thus took place legally on April 7, 2007, though there were sea burials in international waters prior to this.

Careful rational and functional planning based on logical extrapolation of available statistics lay behind the change in government policy. In 2005, 86 % of more than 38,000 deaths were cremated. It was estimated that by 2010, about 90 % of deaths would be cremated, while the number of deaths was projected to grow to about 47,000 by 2015 (Hong Kong Legislative Council 2006). By 2012, the government estimated that half the people who died would not be able to find a columbarium niche. Part of the problem, however, is that many oppose the idea of building a columbarium in their districts (Linebaugh 2007). For example, a proposed crematorium project in Tuen Mun met strong resistance from the district council, on the basis that new burial and cremation facilities would create traffic congestion and exact visual and psychological costs (of being located near "polluted" and unclean land use) for residents in the area (Lau 2007).

However, scattering ashes at sea has also had bureaucratic complications. The change in government position clarified procedures, shortened the application and waiting time, and helped government officers to address public enquiries, a useful exercise in itself. Prior to the decision to introduce clear guidelines, numerous departments were involved. In fact, by FEHD's own admissions, the process was protracted. It had turned down two requests between 2004 and 2006 on the grounds that "the proposed location for the sea burial was too close to the beach lagoons where people swim," "too near to the shipping channels in the busy Hong Kong harbour," "too close to the marine reserves," or "[met] with opposition from people who live in that district" (Lau 2007). The new guidelines clarified the bureaucratic processes and were more enabling for those interested to adopt this option.

Resistant Cultures and Culture of Resistance

Despite government endorsement, sea burials have not yet gained a large following. In part, this is because of the "resistant cultures" and "culture of resistance" in Hong Kong. The former refers to long and deeply held beliefs, rooted in Chinese cultural and religious values and rituals, which the new practices do not address. The latter refers to the presence of a larger (political and social) culture of civil society participation championing, variously, social goals, community participation, and cultural identity and protesting varied official incursions into private and public lives.

The "resistant cultures" in Hong Kong are anchored in established Chinese cultural and religious beliefs and demonstrate the difficulties of encouraging sea burials. First, the Chinese idiomatic expression for death and burial, "入土为安" (rù tǔ wéi ān), suggests that the natural destiny of the human body is to return to the earth upon death. Insofar as language shapes our thoughts, and beliefs shape our linguistic expressions, the notion of returning to the earth at death is deeply entrenched. Without a proper burial, the traditional Chinese belief is that the soul will not rest, giving rise to a "hungry ghost" rather than a venerated ancestor, for death is not in itself "admission to the ranks of the blessed" (Newell 1976, 19). To depart from the practice of grave burial therefore requires a significant cultural shift. In many ways, this shift has been accomplished since cremation is quite widely accepted now, but with the use of columbaria, the ashes have been kept intact in urns, as opposed to the extensive scattering of the ashes during a sea burial. Second, sea burials run up against the Chinese belief that the ashes of deceased ancestors should not be mixed with those of others, or risk lost souls. This can spell misfortune for descendants. Third, dispersing ashes in the seas would be tantamount to feeding the fish, which is not a welcome prospect. It signifies disrespect and lack of care for one's ancestors. Fourth, tending the grave or columbaria of one's parents is a cornerstone of Chinese religious beliefs and family traditions as a way to "fulfill a relationship which has been interrupted but should not be terminated with death" (Chan 1953, 245). The absence of a grave in sea burials is thus problematic. Fifth, the regulations around sea burials in Hong Kong are such that people cannot continue to practice their traditional rituals surrounding death. For example, flower offerings are

part of traditional death-related rituals; the early prohibition against throwing flowers into the sea was a deterrent to those considering sea burials for their deceased ones.

Besides the "resistant cultures," Hong Kong's efforts at encouraging sea burials also come up against a "culture of resistance." In part, the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 which promulgated the "One Country, Two Systems" principle in preparation for the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997 gave rise to a political consciousness that involved not only the introduction of electoral politics, but also contested citizenships and greater demands for citizen involvement (Ku 2009). This new conception required the government to be "inclusive of and accountable to ordinary citizens," who were not shy of generating public outcries, organized protests, and mass demonstrations, reflecting increasing "mobilization of societal interests at all levels," and forcing the "opening of wider channels of consultation and public expression" (Kong 2007, 401). Bearing in mind such a "culture of resistance," the state's efforts to exercise biopower through the regulation of the body (the dead body, in this case), and the regulations of customs surrounding the dead body, have met with various resistances.

There has been public concern over the effect of scattered ashes and offerings on public hygiene and the environment.[3] While there were those who were prepared to accept the practice of sea burials and the need for government regulations to guide their implementation, a NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) phenomenon emerged powerfully to reject the use of particular sites for sea burials. For example, a district council waged a vehement protest against the use of waters nearby for sea burials, which caused the government to beat a retreat. The Tuen Man district council lobbied the secretary general of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China and the new chairman of the Democratic Party (Hong Kong) and pressed the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food and the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene to prevent sea burials in the waters near The Brothers (Nine Pin Islands). The council cited a number of reasons that include a mix of environmental, psychological, ecological, and economic factors. Sea burial in the waters nearby will "cause very bad psychological effects to swimmers and beach goers" in the popular beaches in the area and "very bad psychological effects to the residents and adversely affect the value of their properties." Chinese white dolphin watching would be compromised. Sea burials would exacerbate the already very high solid content in the area, and it would be difficult to control the offering of flowers, foods, and other objects, which will adversely affect seawater quality. Finally, owing to water currents, sea burials near The Brothers may affect the water quality in the beaches already polluted due to sewage discharge from nearby sewage treatment works (Hong Kong Legislative Council 2007). However, the Tuen Man District Council recommended that the other three sea burial sites that the government had identified were more ideal for sea burial. The NIMBY-motivated arguments were successfully promulgated, and the waters off The Brothers cannot be used for sea burials.

State Discursive and Material Strategies

Given the deeply rooted cultural resistances and the pragmatic considerations behind public opposition to sea burials, the government's desire to encourage a change in cultural belief and practice is a difficult one to achieve. To persuade the public about the safety and hygiene of sea burials, the FEHD revealed how human ashes that have been formed as a result of extremely high temperatures (about 850 °C) are nonpolluting. Further, a strict regulatory regime was introduced to ensure that sea burials did not adversely impact sea traffic and water quality, nor contribute to noise pollution. Importantly, the psychological impact on people had to be managed. FEHD's regulations stipulate that, apart from human ashes, no other objects should be thrown into the sea, such as offerings of flowers, food items, and other ceremonial offerings. Subsequently, in an effort to acknowledge the importance of cultural ritual practice, fresh flowers were permitted as organic matter but limited the number and provided means to handle complaints by nearby residents.

[3] "First Time Human Ashes are Legally Scattered into Sea," Ming Pao, April 8, 2007 (translated from Chinese).

Further, if there are any dolphins or "other marine life" around, those conducting the burials are obliged to wait till they swim away before the burial ritual can proceed. Sea burials can also only take place in circumscribed time, with date and hour both designated. The place too would also be designated, in both absolute and relative terms. In absolute terms, three locations within territorial waters were identified and designated sites for sea burials relatively close to harbors. The boat on which the ceremony is held has to be a certain distance away from fishing boats out at sea.

To encourage the use of sea burials, the government also simplified application procedures (Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) Committee 2007). Using a strategy similar to an earlier effort to encourage cremation over burial, the government charged low fees for sea burials (US$40) as compared to niches in columbaria, which can range in price from US$515 to more than US$1500 (Linebaugh 2007). There were also suggestions for other government assistance, for example, by allowing government-owned boats to be rented out at reduced rates.[4] A Legislative Council Member also urged the use of an environment discourse to encourage the public to adopt sea burials, arguing that the government's pitch that sea burial was a solution to the overcrowding of cemeteries and columbaria was a mistake. Instead, the promotion of this mode of ash dispersal should be based on an argument that is about its environmentally friendly character.[5]

Other issues remain contentious. One of the most pointed is whether burning of offerings and paper money, a common part of Chinese funeral rites, should be tossed in the water the same time as the ashes. Whereas some argued that prohibiting these practices was a failure to recognize the importance of established ritual practice and would thus doom the acceptance of sea burials, others were concerned about water pollution if sea burials became popular and huge amounts of ashes could be dispersed in the seas. The FEHD thus needed to strike a balance between consideration of the funeral rites of the major religions and environmental considerations.[6] The environmental rather than the religious factors have thus far prevailed, which serve as a self-regulatory mechanism ensuring that while there are sea burials, the numbers are not yet sufficiently high to cause detriment to water quality.

Woodland and Parkland Burials in Taiwan

Grave Shortages, Columbaria Crowdedness

As in Hong Kong, Taiwan (and Taipei in particular) is faced with overly crowded cemeteries. Despite the "rotating burial" method where grave plots can be used for only seven years (and extended for a maximum of another three), after which the remains have to be exhumed and moved to the columbarium, there is still a shortage of grave plots. Columbaria have also become crowded, with the growth in acceptance of cremation over the years.[7] Indeed, cremation has overtaken traditional grave burials in Taiwan.[8] With the popularity of cremation, the major columbarium in Taipei had reached full capacity by 2004, while the other major columbarium was expected to reach full capacity by 2011. As a result, other methods of burial have been introduced. Taipei City and County Governments have advocated woodland and parkland (or scatter) burials in particular in recent years as a way of managing the scarcity of space for the deceased.

[4] "Hong Kong Should Encourage and Not Restrict Sea Burials," Reuters China, March 14, 2007 (translated from Chinese).
[5] FEHD Committee, Extracts from Meeting Minutes.
[6] Ibid.
[7] "Taipei City Running Out of Cemetery Space: Sea Burials Being Promoted in Recent Years Together with Other New Forms of Burial," Central News Agency, 18 October, 2004 (translated from Chinese).
[8] "Funeral Palours Encourage Eco-friendly Burials," China Times, December 22, 2004 (translated from Chinese).

Woodland burials involve the placing of ashes in urns made of biodegradable material (e.g., paper, starch, corn-based material) in the earth next to an existing tree. Each tree trunk is able to accommodate the ashes of four to eight persons. Within six months, the urns degrade and the ashes become one with the earth, and the burial spot can be used again for other burials, thus allowing more people to be buried in the same plot of land. As a variation, some urns with ashes are placed in the earth and a fresh tree sapling then planted next to it, as opposed to using an existing tree. Woodland burials may occur straight after cremation, or the ashes may be removed from a columbarium or exhumed, cremated, and then brought for woodland burials.

For parkland or scatter burials, no urns are used. Instead, after final funeral rites are conducted, the ashes of the deceased are scattered into the flower-filled gardens and covered by earth. Family members then place fresh flowers in the area to mark the end of the ceremony. Azaleas, camellias, and lilies seem to be among the more popular, while some even choose tea bushes, a reflection of their love for tea. At the first site of such scatter burials at the Fude Life Memorial Park, the Mortuary Service Office set up a memorial wall with a plaque to record the names and other personal details of the deceased so that future generations can pay their respects. In both woodland and parkland burials, there are no traditional tombstones and graves, only trees, fields of grass, and flowers. This reduces the amount of land needed, especially as the site can be used again and again. Indeed, the Taipei Department of Social Welfare[9] estimates that woodland and parkland burials require only 10 % of the space that traditional grave burials need.

The first woodland burial plot was opened in October 2003, a 1.2 ha plot of land next to the Fude Public Cemetery in Taipei. By September 2004, the 500 woodland burial slots in Fude Public Cemetery had all been reserved, and the City Government was planning to build a Life Memorial Park close to the Yangmingshan columbarium for more such burials. By 2007, there were about 800 woodland burials in the Fude Life Memorial Park. The Taipei Mortuary Services Office pointed to these as evidence that woodland and parkland burials had gained increasing acceptance among the people.[10] To cater to the increasing demand, the Taipei Mortuary Services Office encouraged woodland and parkland burials by further setting up a new 1.2 ha burial park beside the Fude Columbarium called Yung Ai Park.

Promoting Woodland and Parkland Burials: Discursive and Material Strategies

In its effort to promote woodland and parkland burials, the Taipei city authorities, particularly the Mortuary Services Office, have invested much effort into generating a positive public discourse about these new forms of burials. Five key discursive tropes are evident in their public communications,[11] centering on nature, recreation, religion, family, and the use of statistical evidence.

Nature is a distinctive trope in a variety of ways. The eco-friendly dimension of woodland and parkland burials is repeatedly emphasized. New trees are planted in memory of the deceased. In commenting on the burial of the ashes of young children beneath trees, the authorities also suggest that the growth of the tree symbolizes a new lease of life and hope to draw on the value of such associated symbols of rebirth to negate the finality of death (Bloch and Parry 1982) as a way of attracting more such burials.[12] The Mortuary Services Office's chief officer further suggests that the trees absorb the ashes after the biodegradable urn decomposes, in the spirit of prolonging life.[13] Further, in their promotion of woodland and parkland burials, government offices also emphasize the notion

[9] In the various cities, it is not uncommon to have more than one government agency oversee some aspect of death and burial practices, ranging from social welfare to health and environment. This reflects the multiple dimensions of the phenomenon.
[10] "Taipei Dispenses with Traditional Notions and Pushes for Tree Burials; Close to 800 People Buried," HK China News Agency, August 21, 2007 (translated from Chinese).
[11] This was analyzed by examining major newspaper reports principally from 2003 (when the woodland burials first started) to 2007.
[12] HK China News Agency, "Taipei Dispenses with Traditional Notions."
[13] "Teacher's Ashes to be Scattered into the Sea," United Daily News, May 21, 2006 (translated from Chinese).

of becoming one with nature after death as the ashes become mixed with the earth.[14] The *China Times* reported that one memorial park in Taipei City features a small bridge over a stream set amid flora such as plum blossoms, magnolias, and roses.[15] This is in contrast to the stereotypical image of eerie and gloomy cemeteries.

Religious organizations and leaders are also incorporated into the strategy of encouraging woodland and parkland burials. The Taipei Mortuary Services Office reports that many religious organizations and adherents of different religions are supportive of woodlands and scatter burials.[16] Among those who have accepted woodland burials, a variety of religions are represented: including Buddhism, Taoism, folk religions, Christianity, and Catholicism. Even Buddhist priests, Christian clergymen, and pastors are reported to have chosen to have a woodland burial as a more environmentally friendly option.[17] A Buddhist group, the Dharma Drum Mountain's Anhe Branch Monastery organized public education activities, such as the hosting of a public symposium in which speakers supported the new burial practices as eco-friendly, while discouraging belief in *feng shui* in burial practices. In particular, the Abbot from the Monastery spoke in favor of the eco-friendly burials and urged that "superstitious beliefs" be discarded.[18]

Furthermore, the family is invoked in the promotion of woodland and parkland burials. Examples of how families can be buried together are cited to show the importance of family togetherness and the support and facilitation of that with the new burial methods. Thus, one example was cited of a husband and wife choosing to be buried together so that they could be together for eternity. In another more extended example, someone had placed the ashes of 10 ancestors around the same tree. The lifespan of the ancestors stretched over 200 years, from the Qing Dynasty to the time Taiwan was established, and the act was one of reunification.[19] Even though such "togetherness" can be achieved in grave burials and columbaria niches as well, this is not foregrounded in the effort to promote the alternative burial methods.

Finally, the use of "evidence," particularly statistical, to report on increasing support for the new practices is used in an effort to generate further interest and adoption. As just one example, the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Social Welfare reported a study in which about 40 % of Taipei residents interviewed indicated that they would accept woodland, parkland, and sea burials.[20] However, such are the efforts to promote these new forms of burial that the authorities sometimes draw on dubious "evidence" to make their case. For example, in an effort to persuade the older generation to consider woodland and parkland burials, the Mortuary Services Office published figures to suggest that the largest groups of people who have used these forms of burial are those in the age groups of 71–75 and above 80, thereby arguing that the older generation does not prefer grave burials as popularly believed. This is a classic case in which statistics can be used to make any argument, for what the authorities omitted to say was that the older age categories are the ones with the largest number of deaths.

Apart from the discursive strategies, the campaign to promote woodland and parkland burials also requires the use of various material strategies. For example, after the woodland or parkland burial, the ashes soon become lost among the plants, and this makes people worry that they will have nothing to remember their loved ones by. The

[14] "Taipei's Woodland Burials Looked on in Approval," HK China News Agency, September 18, 2003 (translated from Chinese).
[15] "Woodland Burials: Plans to Start Charging a Fee," China Times, August 28, 2006 (translated from Chinese).
[16] HK China News Agency, "Taipei's Woodland Burials."
[17] "Woodland Burials are Eco-friendly; a Family Woodland Burial is a Novelty," Central News Agency, August 21, 2007 (translated from Chinese).
[18] "Dharma Drum Mountain Holds Symposium to Promote Eco-friendly Burials," Central News Agency, December 19, 2004 (translated from Chinese).
[19] "Woodland Burials are Extremely Popular One Year On," China Times Express, 9 November, 2004 (translated from Chinese); HK China News Agency, "Taipei Dispenses with Traditional Notions."
[20] "Country and City Governments Jointly Organise Sea Burial in Early May," China Times, March 13, 2007 (translated from Chinese).

Social Affairs Bureau thus set up a "Remembrance website" that allowed families to set up memorials online so that they can pay their respects "virtually." More about this will be discussed later in the case study of China. Another example is rooted in the awareness that there are different preferences among families and individuals regarding the type of trees that people wish to be buried under. Significant effort is put into meeting those preferences. Yung Ai Park, for instance, is constructed with different sections, each with plum blossom, *Osmanthus,* camphor trees, pine trees, or *Araucaria* trees, in an effort to cater to different tastes.

Ritual Transformations

If new burial practices are to be accepted, a key factor must be that family members feel they are able to practice their time-honored rituals, or find new ways of adapting. Unlike sea burials in Hong Kong, the woodland and parkland burials have witnessed the emergence of new or adapted rituals with new practices. For example, family members have been seen to visit the woodland burial plots every week to water the plants, flowers, and trees. As one family member said, "seeing a small tree shrub growing taller with time makes you feel that your loved one continues to live on."[21] Many families have also put up signs and placed decorations, personal effects, fruits, and other offerings such as joss sticks on the ground where the ashes of their loved ones are buried. Some even bring their own plants and trees to mark the spot, or use small rocks to make a fence circling the spot. Parents have also been witnessed to plant small multicolored windmills around the trees where the ashes of their little ones have been buried. As one parent interviewed shared, "I want to keep my baby entertained." During Qingming, the woodland burial areas are filled with all kinds of items, from Buddhist figurines to crucifixes to windmills, toy cars, and toy houses.

These practices reflect a need to mark a spot where a person might return to remember a deceased family member or friend. The locatedness of grief and memory, however, leads to a public environmental problem, as many of the items are left without care or removal thereafter. The proliferation of such practices has prompted the Mortuary Services Office to concede "management oversight" and to propose a ban in 2007 disallowing the placement of personal items in the grounds for woodland and parkland burials, though with lax implementation and much dialogue with families so as to avoid a public backlash. The Office also introduced a new ritual, to place a rock over the spot where the urn is buried to mark the location. This responds to the need for a location marker and a sense of place. To further address the sense of place, the Mortuary Services Office has considered introducing the practice of allowing a tree to be used only by members of the same family.[22]

However, despite the material and discursive strategies of encouragement and the facilitation of ritual practice, not all are ready to embrace the new burial practices, continuing instead to hold on to belief systems that discourage woodland burials in particular. For example, some have expressed worry about being bound to the servitude of tree demons, while others are concerned that the souls of their loved ones would be trapped by tree roots, ultimately exercising a negative influence on the fortunes of future generations. One interviewee shared that she had dreamt about her father telling her that the tree roots had trapped him. The transition to new burial methods will thus continue to have to address long-standing and deeply held belief systems if they are to take root firmly.

Online Mourning and Memorialization in China

[21] "Is Online Tomb Sweeping More Liberal and Advanced?" Singapore Press Holdings, April 3, 2003 (translated from Chinese).
[22] "Placing Offerings Changes the Feel of Woodland Burials," China Times, April 6, 2007 (translated from Chinese).

Virtual Worlds

In pre-communist China, cremation was practiced principally in urban areas only. In 1956, Mao Zedong and another 150 senior officials signed a proposal advocating cremation throughout China. By the 1970s, cremation was nearly universal in the large cities. In 1985, a law was passed that made cremations compulsory in all densely populated areas. Failure to comply would result in a loss of burial subsidies and other penalties meted out through an individual's work unit. Cremation, however, did not necessarily solve the problem of land shortages, for some people built elaborate tombs to house the urns with ashes. Different solutions had to be developed. Like Hong Kong and Taiwan, government offices introduced woodland burials and sea burials, and by 2001, more than 20 of 22 provinces and all 4 municipalities encouraged people to adopt one or both of these practices.[23] Beyond the efforts to effect these changes to burial practices as in Hong Kong and Taiwan, an added dimension has taken off in China: online mourning and memorialization, which goes beyond spatial compression (to use less space) to spatial transcendence (to diminish the importance of place).

The relatively new practice of online mourning and memorialization in China involves the setting up of a website to memorialize the deceased. This may be an independent website that anyone can set up on their own, or a popular website that changes its site design and theme during festivals such as the Qingming, or a memorial site that is developed on a larger dedicated website that specializes in mourning the dead (e.g., Netor, China's first and biggest professional memorial website: see http://cn.netor.com). The dedicated website may be free or operated by a commercial company for a fee. The commercial company may in turn be a company set up specifically for the purpose, or a traditional funeral parlor offering an extended service to its clients. The first online memorial website in China began operations in the late 1990s, while the first commercial online memorial website appeared in 2000 in China. By 2003, there were ten such commercial websites, and by 2007, there were more than 30.[24]

With the websites dedicated to mourning and memorialization, users can operate their computer mouse to drag fresh flowers, matches, incense, candles, and tea and wine cups to simulate the real act of offering flowers, lighting incense and candles, and offering tea and wine. The sites also feature photos of the deceased, prayers offered by their mourners, and stories and reminiscences about past lives, often captured in multimedia format. For some the specific site users may also choose their own backgrounds and tomb stone images. Indeed, a virtual geography is created at some of the sites, so that overseas Chinese who wish to connect with their roots may choose a virtual space that matches the province where the deceased originated for the online mourning ceremony. A further variation of the online practice is sending SMS from mobile phones to the memorial websites during Qingming as a new way of saying prayers of respect to the deceased, rather than going personally to the graves for tomb sweeping. In another variation, some individuals set up their own online memorial sites while alive. They may even extend invitations to their family and friends to post eulogies in advance.

The websites have also developed to such an extent that special sites exist to memorialize family members, friends, colleagues, and teachers, but also those that are dedicated to well-known personalities, from Emperor Xuan Yuan to Sun Yat-sen, Song Qingling, Zhou Enlai, Japanese resistance fighters (like Yang Hucheng), Kuomintang pioneers, and famous singers, actors, and actresses (like Teresa Teng and Mei Lanfang). Even famous characters in novels such as Lin Daiyu in *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and Lu Xun's Ah Q have memorial websites dedicated to them.

[23] "Chinese Turn to New Ways of Burial," People's Daily, April 6, 2001 (translated from Chinese).
[24] "More People in China Turn to Paying Respects to the Dead Online," Xinhua News Agency, April 3, 2007 (translated from Chinese).

The earliest websites did not draw much attention due to insufficient bandwidth and discrepancies in hardware, as well as a low number of netizens.[25] It was only in 2002 that the practice seemed to catch on during the Qingming Festival, and with encouragement from the state soon after, the practice has indeed grown.

State Initiatives, Pragmatic Motivations, and Overcoming the Tyranny of Place

In 2003, the evolution of the virtual memorialization practices caught the attention of the highest levels of government, namely, China's well-known "Two Meetings" ("**两会**") in which the country's top legislative body and top political advisory body met. A proposal from a legislative council member from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was put forward, urging that the relevant government departments give attention and support to the emerging phenomenon, aiding its spread and adoption. The recommendation was built on arguments about participating in environmentally friendly methods of memorialization.[26]

In 2004, the Ministry of Civil Affairs began to encourage virtual tomb sweepings and offerings, and virtual memorial halls began to grow. The initiative "Save the trees through tomb-sweeping online" ('**平**坟植树, **网上**扫墓' *pin fen zi shu, wang shang sao mu*) aimed to help sustain the tradition of tomb sweeping, but in a manner adapted to the modern world. The motivations were essentially pragmatic but couched in environmental terms.

According to statistics provided by the Traffic Department, the number of people traveling within China, within and across cities, during Qingming is only second to the numbers recorded during the Spring Festival.[27] In Beijing alone, it was estimated in 2006 that the human traffic going to the cemeteries during Qingming reached 1.85 million people, while the number traveling across the country exceeded 10 million.[28] This has created massive traffic congestion. The burning of paper money and the setting off of firecrackers as part of the rituals also create fire hazards and environmental pollution. Online practices are therefore encouraged as more environmentally friendly practices.

To encourage Chinese citizens to go online, the government reported how families could save costs by cutting travel to gravesites, oftentimes located in places other than their current residence as well as saving the cost of items to make real offerings.[29] Even though such technologies of communication contribute to a reduction of the barriers between life and death (Cerulo and Ruane 1997) by offering accessibility and freedom of expression in grief and mourning, allowing people to verbalize feelings which they might otherwise not express,[30] as well as lifting the limits of distance (Geser 1998), the opportunity for self-expression that is recognized and highlighted in similar practices in the west is not the basis for encouraging online mourning and memorialization in China. Instead, pragmatic considerations of cost and safety, and at best, civic considerations of environmental protection, are promoted.

Evidence points to relative success. The Shanghai Funeral Service Centre claims to have provided its online service since 2001 and by 2006 had attracted 40 million people to pay their respects to family and friends online.[31]

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[25] Email interview with owner of the owner of a commercial company offering the services who wished to remain anonymous (April 12, 2009).
[26] Interview with Zhao G., CASS, 15 May 2009.
[27] "Sending Words of Remembrance Online During Qing Ming is the New Trend," China News, April 4, 2007 (translated from Chinese).
[28] "Why Online Mourning hasn't Caught on with the People," China Internet Network Information Centre (CINIC), April 10, 2006 (translated from Chinese).
[29] CINIC, "Online Mourning"; Xinhua News Agency, "Respects to the Dead Online."
[30] James Everett Katz and Ronald E. Rice, Social Consequences of Internet Use: Access, Involvement, and Interaction (Boston: MIT Press, 2002): 316.
[31] "China Advocates for the Paying of Respects Online During Qing Ming to Conserve the Environment," Reuters China, April 5, 2006 (translated from Chinese).

Netor, the commercial provider, was set up in 2000 and, in six years, reported that about 6 million people had posted messages and thoughts online for over 60,000 memorial websites.[32] More anecdotally, a message left by a daughter read: "Dad, you have a special home on the Internet, and that means you can spend Qingming with us every day. We can pay our respects to you anytime. Wherever we are, we'll be able to offer our prayers online, and we don't need to be afraid of howling winds or raging storms. If we didn't have this virtual home, would we have been able to speak to you so frequently?"[33] Similarly, another young man who had scattered his parents' ashes into the sea said he was preparing to set up a memorial hall website for his parents, so that his siblings who live in various parts of the world would be able to go online any time to make offerings to their parents. Indeed, he emphasized that they could even use their mobile phones to send an SMS if getting on the Internet was inconvenient. In this way, there was no need for all the siblings to return to their hometown from far-flung places around the globe.[34]

Resistances to Emergent Practice

While there are evidences of success in the development of online memorialization practices, there are also evidences of low levels of online traffic. Shanghai's Fushou Garden Online Cemetery began in 2001, but by 2006, had only attracted 4000 memorial webpages. Guangzhou's Funeral Service Centre's website attracted only 100 webpages over the same period. Gansu started a website in 2005 and, by 2006, had not attracted any memorial webpage and had received only about 5000 hits.[35] There are various reasons that prevent or slow down the diffusion of this new cultural and ritual practice. A first dissatisfaction with the emergent practice is rooted in the view that the Internet format does not lend sufficient solemnity[36] and dignity for occasions which call for the expression of one's deepest feelings toward those who have passed on.[37] As a form of computer-mediated communication with its largely free access and lack of central control, online mourning certainly encourages informality (Katz and Rice 2002).

Another reason for resistance to the emergent practice, many prefer to keep tomb sweeping as a private family affair as opposed to a public display, with dangers of unwelcome attention on the World Wide Web. In particular, those familiar with the potential abuse of a public domain such as the Internet express concern that the easy access of the virtual site may invite vandals and mischief makers, who may write disrespectfully about the deceased.[38] In fact, Kenneth Doka, a professor of gerontology noted that the immediacy and informality of online mourning increases the likelihood that people will say and do things online that they normally would not in real life. This may include disrespectful and mischievous comments. Indeed, at American obituary website Legacy.com, 30 % of the company's budget and 45 of its 75 employees are dedicated to catching personal attacks and inappropriate comments (Urbina 2006).

Relevant also is the Durkheimian desire for ritual to play a social role. For example, Qingming is a time for families to gather for tomb sweeping, but also an opportunity for family bonding. One netizen wrote: "The whole family gets together while going tomb sweeping. Isn't that killing two birds with one stone, and why not?"[39] The occasion in fact presents an opportunity for leisure, an occasion to "go on a trip to relax the mind and body." The

[32] CINIC, "Online Mourning."
[33] "Tomb Sweeping with Just a Mouse Click; Paying Respects Online gets Popular This Year," China Information Industry, April 10, 2002 (translated from Chinese).
[34] Email interview, June 18, 2009.
[35] CINIC, "Online Mourning."
[36] Xinhua News Agency, "Respects to the Dead Online."
[37] China Information Industry Net, "Tomb Sweeping."
[38] China Information Industry Net, "Tomb Sweeping."
[39] China Information Industry Net, "Tomb Sweeping."

facts bear this out. Travel agencies in China's big cities report the success of hiking tours combined with tomb-sweeping activities, which have attracted many families.[40]

Relevant to the commercial sites is the problem of pricing. Taking a particular popular memorial website as an example, setting up a memorial webpage for people to post messages cost 150 RMB in 2006 (An average meal of street food costs around 10 RMB). This is the minimum participation, and is similar to starting a blog, while allowing only a maximum of 150 messages (like 150 blog entries) to be posted. Messages will also remain online for five years only. To upload an offering (similar to uploading a picture) cost 30 RMB. There are, in fact, over 32 price packages, depending on the degree and type of online activity desired. Prices charged by this site are considered cheaper than other providers. For example, another commercial site charges a basic cost of 1000 RMB with yearly maintenance costs of 800 RMB. Uploading a picture cost 30 RMB, and a sum of 100 RMB is charged every time one chooses to pay respects (Tong 2004, 4).[41] This is compared to starting one's own website or blog, at no cost. As a result, some have been put off setting up a memorial page with the commercial providers, though they may turn to setting up their own websites and blog sites.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have examined new burial and memorialization practices in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China and conceptualized the changes in terms of a shift from spatial competition to spatial compression to spatial transcendence. The original competition for space between the living and the dead saw traditional cemeteries giving way to other developmental uses, and space for the dead was compressed as cremation and the placement of ashes in urns lodged in columbaria niches became more widespread. Over time, even columbaria became crowded, and new methods of ash burial and scatter are being encouraged, coupled with new online practices so that the need for locatedness of grief and memory in the physical world may be transcended by creating a virtual site in the online world. I suggest that the success of official efforts to introduce cultural and ritual shifts is rooted in a complex of factors.

One significant consideration of honoring ancestors ritualistically continues to be important to the Chinese, and any change to death practices must support the continuation of such rituals. This is because death, to the Chinese, is "inevitable but not final" and as elaborated in my introduction to the chapter, honoring the ancestors is as much about insurance for descendants, securing a good life for descendants through the ancestors' blessings, as it is about respect. A process of "continual exchange takes place between the family and the ancestors" (Tong 2004, 4). Thus rituals honoring ancestors are repeated periodically, so that the relationship, which has been interrupted between family members, is not terminated with death. A critical component of maintaining this relationship and honoring the ancestors is the ability of family and future descendants to return to a particular site to pay respects. The locatedness assures the family that the deceased is not a wandering ghost but a venerated ancestor (Newell 1976). The challenge of the new practices of sea and parkland burials is that they run in the face of this central value of locatedness when ashes are scattered broadly. Woodland burials maintain some element of locatedness though the fact that the ashes will in time become mixed with the earth (hence, dispersed and mixed/adulterated) also challenges the preference for an exclusive place and identity. The relative reception of these new practices is thus dependent on the ability to address the need for a unique place where memorial practices may be carried out. It is also premised on the ability to maintain relative levels of privacy (hence exclusivity) and public character according to the desires of the descendants. Further, it is necessary that there remains some thread of continuity with old rituals.

[40] Ibid.
[41] CINIC, "Online Mourning."

In this regard, online memorialization becomes a vital development in bridging the old practices of grave burial and cremation/columbarium niches and the new practices of sea, woodland, and parkland burials. A virtual location offers a certain sense of locatedness (provided it does not disappear after some years) where no unique physical location exists. The irony of this is that the virtual location is at once a "place" and "no-place," "placeless and yet always present, there but not there"[42]; it is the least "material" of the sites (compared to burial grounds and crematoria), yet it may allow for the most substantial sense of place in the modern world! The virtual location allows some of the old rituals (particularly the making of offerings) to continue without time or space restrictions, though in a virtual manner. Access to sites can be managed to maintain relative levels of privacy or publicness. In fact, the virtualization of memorialization is simultaneously a process of privatization and increasing public display of remembrance as well. On the one hand, the privatization and individualization take place because the netizen is now involved in making offerings online by him/herself, and the sociality and collective act of a festival like Qingming is lost. On the other hand, the posting of material on the web and the ritual "candle burning," "laying of flowers," and other acts online are all very public events, open for all to see, unless specific checks are put in place, which can be done, depending on personal preferences.

Despite the opportunities that the virtual world offers, and while the Internet penetration rates are growing, they are not yet total (25.3 % in China; 69.2 % in Hong Kong; and 65.9 % in Taiwan).[43] Online memorialization thus cannot fully replace existing ritual practices, and for woodland, parkland, and sea burials to attract more participation, continued discursive and material strategies of encouragement will be necessary, appealing variously to other sense/cents and sensibilities, such as cost savings, eco-friendliness, and associated symbols of rebirth to negate the finality of death.

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[42] I would like to acknowledge Andrew Willford for these words, made as a commentary on an earlier version of this paper.
[43] Internet World Statistics "Asia Internet Facebook Usage and Population Statistics." Accessed August 31, 2009. http://www.internetworldstats.com/asia.htm

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